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THE
ADVANTAGES
AND
DISADVANTAGES
OF THE
MARRIAGE-STATE,

AS ENTERED INTO WITH
RELIGIOUS OR IRRELIGIOUS PERSONS;
REPRESENTED UNDER THE
SIMILITUDE OF A DREAM.
A NEW EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN APPENDIX
BY THE AUTHOR,

Wherein the Subject is further considered, and the Arguments confirmed by Proofs taken from the Ancient Jewish History.

Y O R K.

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In the first place, if we expect happiness in the Marriage state, we must be careful in our choice. Be not guided by the eye, or by fancy, but enquire into the real character of the person with whom we would unite.

Has she been educated by virtuous Parents, or has she by any other means been well instructed? Has she been accustomed to honest industry and frugality? Has she been free from vice, and does she dislike the company of bad people? Is she respected & beloved by those who are good; and above all, has she a Just sense of her duty towards God. These are points upon which every prudent person whether man or woman would wish to be satisfied before they engage in one of the most weighty affairs in this Life.



We ought to have the greatest care, & circumspection, how we impart a Kiss to any one, that it may be no other than a pious salutation, or an Act of Religion. If it excites our thoughts to the least impurity, it excludes us from Eternal Life. Come LORD JESUS.

A THEN-AGORAS

THE
ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES
OF THE
MARRIAGE-STATE.

SINCE vision and prophecy are sealed up, and no man has liberty to add any thing to the words of the book of the revelations of Jesus Christ; all dreams, omens, signs, tokens, pretended visions, and revelations, or any kind of prognostications whatsoever, and observations upon them, are to be esteemed nothing at all but delusions of the devil; whereby the Prince of Darkness deceives weak minds, who are seeking more after the chaff than the wheat.

BUT though the most high God severely re- proves all such as pretend to predictions or knowledge of secrets by interpretations of dreams; yet as men dream, they may lawfully tell their dreams to one another, without any design to deceive by them. I shall therefore take liberty to relate the following one.

IF I FANCIED myself travelling in the eastern parts of the world; and, at last, coming to the city of

Old Babylon, where I was much amused in viewing the curiosities of the place, as the tower, the wall, the gates, the streets, the palace, the river, the images in the plain of Drura, &c. I observed the city, and it appeared in different views. In one part the people were entirely taken up in revellings, feastings, diversions, splendid appearances, and enjoying themselves. In the other part they were more reserved, and were much taken up in a demure dress and behaviour; in the decency of their houses and streets, and in the regularity of their towers and fortifications, &c. but without any appearance of dangers, alarms, or molestations; they seemed all entirely at ease.

HOWBEIT, when I had almost satiated myself with gazing at the particular shows, I thought to take a prospect of the whole city together. So I walked to a rising ground belonging to it, but a little retired from the crowd, where I saw a booth, which I took to be built on purpose for the conveniency of taking prospects, and I went directly to it. And at the door I saw an old man, of whom I inquired if he had ever a prospect glass, whereby I might be favoured with a full view of that royal city; which I supposed to be the metropolis of the world. He told me, if I pleased to take a deliberate observation, I might, perhaps, have different apprehensions of that splendid city, than I had at present; for he assured me it was full of intestine perplexity, caused by envy, malice, excess, and corruption; that the inhabitants had no real satisfaction in themselves; and it was only by those extravagancies and amusements,
which

which I had seen they kept themselves from perpetual distraction. He then fetched out his prospective, and told me, if I pleased, he would show me the situation of the place, whereby I might be convinced that its condition was not so happy, nor its glory so majestic, as I imagined. So I took a distinct view on the south side, and the foundation of the place appeared to be built upon nothing but bogs and quick sands, which could not possibly sustain the buildings, but ere long they must inevitably sink. I again took a view on the north side, and I found the foundation was all bituminous and sulphureous matter, interspersed with subterraneous fire, which appeared ready in a moment to break forth into flames. He then bid me look to the east; and I saw a very formidable army approaching the city, with full power and commission to destroy it; and they spread themselves around with fury, like the roaring of the sea. And there was a trembling upon all the hills, the rivers, the trees, and the fields round about; but all the inhabitants of the city continued in a stupefaction.

WHEN I had beheld and deliberated on these things, it filled me with such astonishment as almost caused my bowels to turn within me. Such was my disappointment, and the horror that seized me, that I thought I was neither able to bear the sight, nor fly from it, nor stand my ground. And I asked the old man if I might lodge all night in that booth, but he told me it was not a place for lodging, nor would any person in his right mind think it safe to sleep so near the city: but, if I pleased, I might come in and rest myself a little. And when I en-

tered I found four young men very carefully perusing a map, seeming to make very particular remarks, and diligent observations, and would sometimes earnestly inquire the old man's judgement, to inform them of the meaning of some things. Whereupon I inquired what piece it was that so much attracted their attention. They told me it was the map of Babylon and Canaan, with all the roads between the two places. And they having had a full prospect of the same things which I had just now beheld, and being determined to leave their native country, and travel to the latter place, was the reason of their present inquiries; and the old man, being a native of Canaan, and acquainted with both countries, as well as the roads from one to the other, they frequently applied to him for instruction in things difficult.

THESE four young men appeared so like each other in their apparel, their speech, and behaviour, as well as some of their features, that I verily took them all to have been own brothers, and knew not any thing to the contrary, until I became acquainted with a certain person who had some knowledge of the places where they were born, and of the register-books. He informed me that two of them were sons of the bond-woman, but the other two were sons of the free-woman.

So I observed them, and they all made preparation, with seeming vigorous resolution, for their supposed journey. And amongst other consultations with the old man (their instructor) they earnestly craved his advice, whether it were expedient for
each

each of them to take along with him a female companion. Which he very cheerfully encouraged them to do, provided they were such as were disposed to go the same way, and had their hearts engaged to seek the same country along with them : But otherwise he admonished them, by all means, to avoid such companions as had no knowledge of, or delight in, the way they designed to travel.

He pointed out to them many difficulties in the way, where the company of strangers would be of very dangerous consequence ; told them the need they would find of strengthening and encouraging in the way, rather than hindering and discouraging ; and reasoned much upon the evil that would attend (in many respects) such companions as took no delight in the way, and compared it with the advantages they might expect in the company of such as took pleasure ; and would endeavour to animate them therein. He further informed them in many instances, what bad effects travellers, who had formerly gone that way, had found from disagreeable companions : And that (to prevent the like inconveniences) the king of the country had made a law, That none of the subjects should join with strangers to be companions in that journey, and therefore he earnestly cautioned them, whatever they did, to be exceeding careful in their choice.

I waited to see what influence this advice would have upon the minds of these young men : But I observed, that, at the first, none of them seemed to relish his counsel ; for they had all either contracted some acquaintance with, or placed their

fancy upon maids who were natives of Babylon, to whom their hearts were very inclinable. But the more they appeared engaged in their affections, the more their instructor insisted on the dangers and pernicious consequences which were most certain to attend their having such companions: and withal told them, the King had appointed one to attend them in their journey, and whose name was *Self-Denial*, without whose company it would be impossible ever to reach the borders of Canaan; and that to chuse a stranger for a companion would be such an insult to him (at the first setting out) as might cause misunderstanding all the way. For his part he told them, that to pretend to travel to Canaan, and choose a Babylonian for a companion, was such a contradiction, that he could not but very much doubt the sincerity of their hearts. For if it was possible at all for a sincere traveller to choose such a companion; (as he would not be too bold in his assertions) yet he was very certain it could not be so long as they continued in the right use of their reason; and he must discharge his conscience in giving them timely admonition, &c.

I observed the event of these consultations, and I found the eldest son of the Bond-Woman could not be moved by all these arguments, but resolutely chose one who was an utter stranger to the path, nor had any delight in, or desire thereto: And when he had covenanted with her, she proved so averse to going along with him, and so reluctant to his pursuing his intended journey, that she prevailed upon him to desist from his purpose. So he settled with her in Babylon, and they were both there
when

when the city was destroyed, and perished together in the ruins.

BUT the younger brother (son of the bond-woman) took a little more regard to the counsel given him, and seemed more heedful in his choice; and (in a slight manner) sought to get a companion that would be willing to go along with him. So, at last he met with one who appeared compliable to his desire, though she had no knowledge of the way, nor any desire to it, only it seemed a matter indifferent; and therefore, as he was inclined to undertake the journey, she would condescend to compliment him with her company. This pleased the young man very well, as he thought he should both gratify himself in the choice of a companion, and also act conformable to his directions. But he did not consider, that while her mind was possessed with such indifferency, her company must needs be very unprofitable: However, they joined hands; and she (as good as her word) complimented him with her company; and they set out both together, as if they would proceed on their journey. But her indifferent mind soon prevailed so as to cool his warm affections, and caused their advances to be very slow. They would frequently sit down in the shade, and sometimes divert themselves with trifles, and often turn aside out of the way, which made their progress very small. And this manner of loitering prevailed more and more, until, at last, they came to a low valley by the brink of the river Euphrates, where they turned aside and fell asleep; and, while they slept, there arose a swell in the river, and the flood swept them both away.

As for the younger son of the free-woman, when he had heard the admonitions, they made some deep impressions upon his mind, and filled him with some awful apprehensions. For he was convinced of the pernicious consequences, which would attend such company, and appeared very solicitous to avoid them. But (how it was, I have now forgotten; whether, before these considerations, he had contracted a correspondence, and had not resolution to deny himself; or whether afterwards, by dalliance, and giving latitude to his fancy, he forgot himself; some way or other he proved to be entangled with a daughter of the Chaldees, which, betwixt the instructions he had received, and his own unguarded affections, caused some strugglings in his mind. For tho' the person was of a complaisant disposition, and did not seem at all reluctant to the things he had in view, yet he plainly perceived she had no real taste to them; and that her innate disposition was more to Babylon than Canaan. She had never been convinced of the misery and ruin approaching her native country; nor had she ever been acquainted with the pleasures and delights of that land which he was seeking after; nor had she any desire to the way. But his strong inclination stimulated him to reason upon every thing in the most advantageous and promising light, and to put the most favourable construction upon every circumstance, as thus, " That her complaisance was
 " such, that he would not be any hinderance or
 " molestation to him. That, by his example, he
 " might engage her mind to that which she had no
 " inclination to at present. That those engage-
 " ments

ments, which he should enter into with her, were
 “ of another nature, and might be performed with-
 “ out interfering immediately with the concerns of
 “ his journey. That it was very hard to be pro-
 “ hibited from the enjoyment of one who, in all
 “ other respects, appeared so desirable ; and that
 “ probably he might never find a companion com-
 “ plete in every point, &c.” In short, the young
 man persisted in these kinds of reasoning until he
 had almost stupified his senses ; but still could not
 free himself from convincing and dreadful appre-
 hensions of the evil of taking so indirect a step, and
 the inconveniences which were certain to attend
 it ; until, at length, a resolute passion prevailed, so
 far that his eyes were darkened, that he scarce
 perceived the day from the night. And during this
 obstruction of his senses, he went one evening, after
 both sun and moon were gone down, and joined
 hands with this Babylonian. But when the sun arose
 in the morning, and he was a little come to himself,
 he then became sensible of the rashness of his ad-
 venture ; but it was too late to recal it. He was
 now aware into what snares he had brought himself ;
 into what difficulties he was involved ; and what
 incommodities must attend his journey ; and that
 now he had no way left, but to make the best he
 could of the matter ; and to grapple with it, as
 well as it should please God to enable him.

So after some anxious thoughts and bitter reflec-
 tions, he endeavoured to smother his grief as well
 as he could, and betook himself to his journey, ex-
 erting his utmost skill and power to take his com-
 panion along with him. But, alas ! when he at-

tempted to lead her into the way, he found she had no feet ; she could not move a step farther than he carried her ; and a heavy burden she proved. So I observed some of his travel ; and when he had met with dangers, distresses, or disappointments, he would begin to express his grief, and to unbosom his mind to his companion ; but she had no ears, no understanding, nor heart to sympathize with him ; nor was she capable of being made to know the nature of his complaints. If he was beset with robbers, wild beasts, serpents, or any annoyance, he would sometimes make his complaint to her ; but she could neither assist nor comfort him. If he wanted direction in any part of his way, she could not give him any counsel. If he was sick or wounded, and wanted cordials, or oils to his wounds, she had no hands to administer any relief. And as she never was capable of yielding him any succour, or comfort in his sufferings, neither was she ever capable of partaking of any of his enjoyments. If he met with any gardens of spices, or refreshing springs by the way, he would offer her to eat or drink with him ; but she had no taste. If he found sweet flowers, he would pluck, and give them to her ; but she had no smell, nor could have any delight in them. If he had any delightful prospects by the way, he would endeavour to shew them to his companion ; but she had no eyes. If he met with any fellow-travellers by the way, he would invite her to enjoy their company ; but she was never sociable with himself, or any other person, who spoke the language of Canaan : for it was a language which she could not learn. Thus, whatever grief beset him, or whatever enjoyments

joyments he was favoured with in his journey, he never found any sympathy or congratulation from her ; nor was she of the least use to him all the way ; nor were her affections ever moved, any otherwise than sometimes to despise, and sometimes to shew a disgust, or disturbance of mind.

BUT as she had no life, capacity, sense, nor activity in the chosen path ; she had so much the more vivacity in things pertaining to her own element. So that when she could draw him aside out of the way, she would discover such a sprightliness in all her senses, be so pleasant and diverting, and all parts of her conversation so engaging, that it often prevailed upon him to turn aside with her, and proved a very great hinderance to him in his journey. For though it was not in his power to find any thing in his way that could divert or influence her mind ; yet she frequently found out something in her own path which did divert and insensibly draw away his heart, by which he was many times entangled and laden with thick clay.

ANOTHER thing I observed, that after he had begun his journey, the King of Israel (whose subject he was) sent him some young lambs to feed, with a strict charge to teach them diligently in the way, and bring them up in his nurture and admonition. But the performance of this command was rendered impracticable ; for as he instructed them to go right, she induced them to wander ; as he endeavoured to gather them, she scattered them ; and as he fed them with wholesome food, she would surfeit them with poisonous herbs. So which way the King disposed of them afterwards, I never knew, but they never prospered under his care.

THUS her company never yielded him the least benefit or assistance thro' his whole journey, but was an alloy to all his joys, and an aggravation to all his sorrows. And it frequently caused him very much regret of mind, to think of his own unadvised engagement; and of the much neglect in duty, wandering, and lost time, which it had been the occasion of to him, as well as to observe the wretched stupefaction of her mind, which was incapable of sharing in any of his blessed enjoyments, or of being affected with any of his calamities; in-somuch, as it turned his pleasant journey into a wearisome travel through a lonesome wilderness.

BUT at last (thro' many dull hours, fatigues, and tiresome steps) he arrived near the borders of the land, upon the bank of the river Jordan, where (in the midst of the stream) he beheld a man in a rich priestly vesture, standing to stop the torrent till he was passed over, which made him approach the river exceedingly transported with joy. Yet even here he could not refrain from sighing, when he found it was not possible for his companion to go with him one step further. But the glory of his Prince now in view, and the joy of approaching the promised land, soon revived his spirits, and made him, with readiness, leave her, to pass the river. Here his burthens dropped off, and all his clogs were left behind; he went on with fresh vigour and cheerfulness in his countenance, as if all things were forgotten, but the joy that was before him. But as he was taking some of his last steps, just ready to set his feet on Canaan's shore, he looked behind him, and saw her sitting upon the sand,

sand, and beheld the river returning with such an overflow, as carried her along the rapid stream into the Dead Sea.

As for the elder brother (son of the free-woman), when he had heard the instructions and admonitions, it wrought some serious reflections in his mind, and made him very deliberate. Notwithstanding he was a person of a bright genius, great vivacity, and a fine taste, he determined to deny himself; so as when he saw the beauty and graceful mien, and heard the courteous conversation of the Babylonish maids, he would withdraw from them, and turn away his eyes, lest his heart should be ensnared. However, it sometimes fell in his way, to have conversation with some who appeared very agreeable and engaging, and might have some influence on his affections: especially one, whose person, birth, circumstances, virtues, and accomplishments, rendered her extremely agreeable, and made her appear very promising to make a valuable companion: insomuch, that many of his acquaintance greatly encouraged him to pursue that opportunity, and not neglect so valuable a prize. This made him stagger a little, (for indeed she wanted no accomplishments but the language of Canaan to make her just such an one as his heart could wish) and caused him to reason in his own mind with such interrogations and replies as these:

Q. CAN I expect to find an object more desirable, or one more likely to be a happy companion, and a help-meet?

A. SHE

A. SHE may prove so to a person who can be conformable to stay with her in Babylon ; but as I am bound to another country, I might find bitterness in that which would appear happiness in another person.

Q. BUT have I not reason to hope, that a person of her refined qualities may be endued with such blessings as to make her a suitable companion for me in my journey ?

A. A person may be accomplished with all the refinements, improvements, and excellencies of Babylon, so as to appear superior to many of the citizens ; but if these be only the accommodations of their own country, they can only make a gradual difference between them and the most abject peasants ; whereas there is necessarily a specific difference between a Babylonian and an Israelite.

Q. BUT is it not very censorious to look upon such a becoming worthy person as no better than a mere Babylonian ?

A. INASMUCH as the difference is so great, that a Babylonian cannot become a subject of the King of Israel, unless he be formed anew ; we cannot esteem them any other, so long as there does not appear the specific features of the select nation ; neither the idiom of their language, the mien of their behaviour, nor yet an earnest inquiry after the desired land. For we are not to form our conceptions of them different to the descriptions given by the King's scribes;

Q. Is

Q. Is it not exceeding hard that I must deny myself an object so agreeable ?

A. THE King of Glory denies nothing that is good ; therefore, if it were really good, it would not be denied me ; he only denies us those things which he knows would be evil, and it is a real kindness to us to be denied them. But suppose I thought it a real good ; is it hard that he should deny me one favour, who has given himself to me, with all-blessings in heaven and earth ?

Q. WHAT if I never find one so agreeable, who travels the happy road ?

A. IF I had the object now before me, it must entirely depend on the blessing of God, whether I should have any enjoyment or not ; and have I not more reason to expect a blessing in the right way, than in the wrong ? Beside, as no good thing is withheld, nor any thing denied, but because it is evil, whatever God is pleased to bestow in his own way must be most agreeable.

Q. MAY not the valuable qualifications attending this person be so blessed as to be a means to make me happy and useful in the way, tho' she walk not in it herself ?

A. HAVE I any reason to expect to be made happy by any person who is an utter stranger to those things wherein my happiness consists ? Or can I expect to find usefulness in the way from that which cannot be enjoyed or obtained without going

going out of the way ? Besides, whatever qualifications she is endued with, or however valuable accommodations she is possessed of, it never will be her inclination to employ those excellencies to assist others in a way which she herself hath no delight in.

Q. BUT seeing her disposition is so agreeably complaisant, and her mind so well qualified with natural virtues, and decorated with so many acquired ornaments, is there any reason to doubt, but that a person thus prepared will have a taste for learning and embracing the best things ? And may I not, therefore, expect to be an instrument to engage her mind to walk the blessed way ?

A. ALL the accomplishments that a person can possibly receive from Babylon, can never prepare, qualify, or dispose them for travelling to Canaan ; nor will it, by any means, induce or incline any person to receive the real knowledge or love of that country. Therefore those who are not powerfully called by the King's commandment, and inwardly attracted by a vital influence, can never be engaged by any other motive or persuasion whatsoever. For there is nothing in the nature of a Babylonian (without the inchoation of new principles) that is capable of attraction. But the more excellent her accomplishments are, the more strongly her mind will be cemented to that climate from which she received them. And on the other hand, as I formerly was a Babylonian, tho' now blessed with new principles, the old tincture still remains in my nature, which, like so much tinder, is ready to kindle with every spark of Babylonish fire.

Wherefore

Wherefore the greater excellences she is embellished with, the greater influence it will have to draw me aside into her paths, and so put me in perpetual danger. For of this, I am infallibly assured, that they will draw away one's heart.

WHEN he had thus reasoned with himself, he made a full pause, and appeared in a strong agitation of mind, and a paleness arose in his face. And I heard him sigh and say to himself, "Whither has my mind been roving!" and, trembling, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and earnestly cried, "O God of all grace, deliver me from temptation!" And from that time he never would regard any of the damsels of that city; but said, he would wait till he should find a true companion, and till then he would walk alone.

So he went on his way rejoicing that he had escaped the snare, and carrying along with him this motto, "The Lord is my portion;" enjoying great satisfaction in his own mind; saying to himself, If my King sees it good for me to walk alone, I know he will bless that state unto me; but if it be for my good to enjoy a companion, I know his goodness will provide one for me, without my going out of the way to find one.

BUT as he was thus going on his way, he observed a young virgin who was walking the same road, and he began to desire to be favoured with her company, but thought it adviseable to be very deliberate, because many seem to walk the same road, who only go part of the way, and then turn
off

off into some other path. Therefore he diligently observed whether she closely attended to the right way. So he perceived her to take something out of her bosom, and diligently perused it for a while, and then put it into her bosom again, and pursue the strait path; whereupon he went up to her, and inquired where she was bound. She told him she was setting her face towards Zion. He asked her what it was she had been perusing? And she shewed him that it was the map of the road, which she took along with her for her guide. He then began to inquire further, who she was, and whence she came? She told him she was by birth a Chaldean; by education and conversation a Babylonian; but the King of Israel had sent for her to go forth to seek a better country. He also asked what expectations or encouragement she had in taking such a journey? She told him she had the King's word to make her an inhabitant in his royal palace, when she arrived at the upper Bethel; and to grant her sufficient defence and sustenance all the way thither. He asked if she could be fully satisfied in the King's veracity? She told him the frauds and jealousies of Babylon had made such impressions upon her mind, that she had found it very difficult to believe him that could not lie; but his Majesty had condescended to give her the strongest demonstrations of his fidelity: so that now she was convinced she had no reason to doubt his goodness, for he had confirmed his promise with an oath, and had given her to see, that in his own records it was sealed with blood, and the counter part he had written upon her breast, and sealed it in characters of life; and hitherto she had found his word verified to her, in strongly defending, and abundantly supplying

plying her, so that she could set to her seal that it was true. Then she also asked him divers questions relating to his travels and enjoyments, and he likewise answered her in a free and satisfactory manner, so that their affections began to grow warm towards one another. It was a very comfortable interview, and their minds were refreshed by each others conversation.

AND they appeared so agreeable to one another, that he began to think they might be pleasant and profitable companions all the way. But first he retired for a while to deliberate on the conversation that had passed already, when the more he thought of her diligence in the pursuit of her journey, and her fixed satisfaction concerning the end of it, her understanding in those things laid down in her guide, her experience in the way, and the delight she appeared to take in meditating on, and conversing about, the joys of the city of habitation, &c. the more he was satisfied that she was a Prince's daughter, travelling to the royal palace. And when he had lifted up his eyes to heaven, and earnestly besought the Most High God for direction, and a blessing upon farther conversation, he came again into her company. And, after some further discourse, he asked the reason of her walking on her journey alone? She told him she found but few travelling the same road, and she did not think it expedient to turn aside, or neglect her way, for any company in the world. If she met with company, such as delighted in the ways of wisdom, she took pleasure therein; for by such company her heart was refreshed, and she thought herself strengthened in her journey thereby; but otherwise,

wise, she chose rather not to be alone, at leisure to divert herself in examining her map, viewing the springs by the way, with the fruit-trees and sweet flowers, hearing the singing of birds, and meditating on the glories of her Prince, and the joys she should have in his presence, &c. so that as company was pleasant when she could enjoy it, the delights in the way supplied the want of company when alone. And, upon the whole, she neither was anxious to have company, nor had any aversion against it; her desire being to enjoy that only which might be conducive to forward her in the right way.

THEN he proposed, that since they had found each others conversation comfortable and useful, it was his opinion, it might be for their mutual advantage to join together, and engage to keep company all the way. She told him it was not for persons of their profession to do any thing rashly; she would deliberate on it. So she retired and prostrated herself before the King her Father, telling him the matter, imploring wisdom to direct, declaring herself willing to enjoy, or be denied of any thing, so it were according to his will, and might be for his honour. He told her she had already been informed, and well knew what manner of persons they must be, with whom it would be expedient for Kings daughters to keep company; therefore, if she found the person to be one of the Blood-Royal, and endued with princely qualities, she was at her full liberty; and moreover, by him, it should be esteemed honourable. So when these two lovers met again, and had deliberately consulted between themselves all such things as they conceived

conceived necessary relating to such an engagement, and had duly considered the King's statutes thereupon, and jointly petitioned his Majesty's presence with them, and his blessing on their undertaking, they joined hands with great satisfaction and serenity of mind, rejoicing to see themselves preserved from so many snares, and thus happily joined together by a divine hand.

I THEN observed those two happy companions pursuing their journey, and here I saw verified an ancient counsel, a *Help-meet*. For they were sincere friends, pleasant companions, faithful partners, and useful assistants to each other. If they met with difficulties by the way, they would take each other by the hand to support them. In dangers they would counsel and stand by one another. In sorrows they would sympathize and comfort one another. If beset with enemies, one would watch while the other slept. If one were sick, the other would comfort with cordials. If one were indisposed in mind, the other would divert with some sweet song, or discourse concerning the pleasant land. If one were at a loss concerning any part of the way, the other would assist in searching and explaining the directions. If one were ready to turn aside, the other would caution and admonish of the danger. If one were employed in any service, the other would be ready to assist therein. If one found a refreshing spring by the way, would call the other to come and drink. If one found any refreshing fruit, sweet spices, or delightful flowers, would pluck and bring to the other. If one heard any joyful tidings, would come rejoicing and tell the other. If one had any pleasant prospects

spects of the kingdom, would endeavour to shew them to the other. If one was favoured with an audience of the King, would also remember and intercede for the other. And if one was blessed with any special favours, the other would congratulate and rejoice on the occasion, &c.

THEN I was convinced, that two are better than one: and yet it is manifest, that they were no more twain; for I know not whether to call them two souls dwelling in one body, or one soul inhabiting two bodies; but it appeared very conspicuous, that two were become one.

So I continued observing this united pair advancing in their way, for they greatly contributed to help each other forward; many difficulties they surmounted, and many rich blessings they enjoyed as they travelled in the way. At last they arrived at a pleasant hill, in view of the Land of Promise, full of delights, refreshing fruits, pure streams, and desirable entertainments. Here they sat down and rested in a delightful arbour, blessing God, and congratulating one another in consideration of their enjoyments. Then they went and refreshed themselves among the fruits and fountains, and afterwards they ascended to a tower, where was a large prospective glass, from whence they looked back upon Babylon, and saw it all in flames, and the country turned to burning pitch. They then gave praise and glory to God for their wonderful deliverance, as well as for all the deliverances they had in the way. Then they took a prospect of the land before them, and saw Jerusalem, the royal palace, the goodly mountains of Lebanon, the

the clusters of Eshcol, and all the rivers flowing with milk, and the hills dropping down sweet wine. Then they looked below to the great streams of Jordan, and beheld the High-Priest in his shining robes, waiting to carry them over. They also heard the inhabitants on the other side triumphing, singing, and shouting for joy. Then they also, with emulation, lifted up their voices in songs of praise, and transports of joy, to him that is, and that was, and that is to come; which raised my mind to such an ecstasy, that I awoke, and behold it was a dream,

BUT the thing was certain—and the interpretation thereof was sure.

A N

A P P E N D I X

By the A U T H O R.

THE preceding essay, upon the effects of a well or ill guided choice in the affair of marriage, was first written and sent to a young man in a private letter of advice, which I chose to put in the form of a dream, representing the case under a variety of figures, in order to convey a just idea of the advantages and disadvantages which naturally ensue. But many copies being dispersed among my acquaintance and others, and being importuned to publish it, I consented, after a number of years, to commit it to the press.

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Since which time divers persons, who knew nothing of the author, have taken upon them to reprint it. And, by the liberties they have used, it is rendered more contemptible than it appeared in the loose imaginations of the dreamer. One of these editors was so kind as to correct some of the strokes, by which alteration (however small it may be thought) it was divested of its genuine features. Another was so officious as to interpret the dream; but some of his ideas are such as never entered the dreamer's fancy; and some of his notes (being attempts to explain things which naturally explain themselves) are only fit to affront the reader's capacity.

PARABLES and similitudes are intended as a *whet* to the mind of the reader, to stimulate his attentive inquiry into the designed reality: And for these to be immediately explained, before they can be deliberately read, makes them flat and dry, and prevents the use of the allegorical figure: for which reason, when I wrote that piece, intitled, *A Mathematical Question*, I did not chuse to incumber the pages with explanatory notes: yet, that the meanest capacity might not be totally at a loss, and so deprived of the designed instruction, I gave a short (but sufficient) explanation in the introduction to the answer.—But as for these pages upon marriage, my first design was to make the similitude so plain and easy, that it would naturally open itself to every attentive reader, without any further interpretation. Therefore, I shall only add a few thoughts by way of supplement, that they who do not understand the reveries of my sleep, may have a full view of my deliberate sentiments when

when awake. For unto the same persons, from the same motives, and with the same designs that I first told the foregoing dream fourteen years ago, I now write the following address.

To all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who being in a single state, but, for sufficient reasons, judge it expedient to embrace the state of marriage, or to any individual of them, to whom my counsel may be acceptable, whether male or female, for they are all one in Christ, love to your souls, fervent concern for your spiritual comfort, and earnest desire that God may be glorified in your lives, are the motives that excite this address to you, in which my design simply is, to admonish you to beware of being entangled with such companions in the conjugal relation, as certainly will be heavy clogs, pricking thorns, and troublesome briers; to retard and incommode your walking with God.

If thou art born of God, to enjoy his spiritual presence, and the light of his countenance, is thy superlative joy, thy ultimate delight. If thou art a believer in Jesus, to bear his image in righteousness and true holiness, is the inflexible and incessant desire of thy soul; if thou art blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the glory of thy heavenly Father is the tenderest point that can touch thy heart, and the most powerful spring that moves the whole series of thy life. And whatever temptations may assail thee, whatever carnal inclinations may war in thy members, or whatever transient declensions from the power of godliness may wound thy soul, it will for ever be impossible

for all the powers of hell so far to prevail over thee, but that these spiritual dispositions will perpetually continue to be fixed, habitual, reigning principles in thy mind. If this is not the case, thou art yet in thy sins; for where God resides, there is holiness of truth; and wherever he makes his habitation, he takes up his rest for ever.—

Therefore, please to remember, that the marriage contract is the strongest obligation, the closest union, and for the longest period, that nature is capable of. And if thou shouldst chuse a bosom companion, who is a stranger to thy God, will it not have a natural and unavoidable tendency to interrupt thy communion with the Lord of Life, to infect thy mind with a carnal disposition, and be a perpetual remora to thy lively and diligent pursuit of those things whereby God might be glorified? And if thou art caught in a snare, through thine own imprudence to make such a rash adventure, may it not cause thee to go softly all thy years in the bitterness of thy soul? *What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an Infidel?*

If a soldier, after swearing allegiance to his Majesty, and accepting a post in the army, should contract the most intimate friendship, enter into the closest engagements, and unite all the interest he has in the world with a partisan in the enemy's camp, what would the Prince think of such a man? Would he not be deemed an impostor?—And are not all believers the soldiers of Jesus Christ? And all unbelievers the servants of sin? Now for a man to profess himself a servant of the Lord, devoted to Jesus Christ, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he

he goeth, and yet to enter into such a solemn engagement with one whose heart is enmity against God; is it not a glaring contradiction? Is it possible to avoid a suspicion of that man being an hypocrite in heart? Does not such a step plainly discover either profound ignorance, to imagine that a believer and an unbeliever can possibly be comfortable companions, or insensible to the comfort of his own soul, and the glory of God! Or else, that he is weary of his own profession, and thinks he shall have a handsome excuse to abandon it, when he shall have this to say, *I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot.*

BUT know, my dear friend, that in the marriage choice it is not sufficient for thee to shun only those persons who are openly prophane; for many sober serious persons are seriously at enmity against the truth as it is in Jesus: Nor yet to avoid those of a different sect or denomination; for thou mayst marry one of the same denomination with thyself, (or whatever sect thou art) and still find thyself as destitute of a spiritual companion as if thou hadst married a worshipper of Diana. But thou art to consider the greatness of the enterprise, the importance of the undertaking, with the consequences which may attend it. And remember, that God made the woman to be an *help-meet*, and such she certainly is, if wisely chosen; but it is impossible for a child of light to enjoy that blessing in a child of darkness? Therefore look for one that knows and believes in Christ, loves and fears God, whom God hath called out of the darkness into his marvellous light; these ought to be the first accomplishments

in the eye. I do not say that thou canst search the heart, so as to be an infallible judge who is, or who is not, *born of God*. But, so far as the tree is known by its fruit, it is thy indispensable duty to make the most deliberate observation; to have a special regard to the person's profession and practice, as well as to what knowledge, faith, love, humility, &c. is manifest. And let no inducements, as the gratification of thy own fancy, obliging thy friends, accommodating thyself in the world, &c. influence thy mind to palliate a circumstance which thou wilt certainly find to be of the utmost consequence to thy comfort, or discomfort of any thing that can attend the matrimonial relation. But, perhaps, thou wilt think me too sanguine in my admonitions, and too severe in my restrictions: I shall therefore address thee upon a more solid and authoritative ground, *the word of God*.

THAT universal deluge of corruption, wickedness, and violence, which brought down the wrath of God in a universal deluge of water, was first introduced thro' mixed marriages between those that professed to fear God, and those that feared him not. *The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.* Many conjectures, and some not a little extravagant, have been formed concerning the sons of God, and the production of their marriage with the daughters of Adam. But they that read the history with simplicity and attention may easily gather the truth of the relation. In the sacred language, the worshippers of the true God are distinguished from the rest of the world.

world by this character, *Sons of God*, as we find in the book of Job, and frequently in the New Testament. And God has made a special promise, that they shall be called by his name, Hof. i. 10. But here it may be necessary to note, that the 5th chapter of Genesis, being a genealogy of the antediluvian patriarchs, and inserted in this place, stands as a parenthesis, and does not break the chain in which the 4th and 6th chapters stand inseparably connected as an entire history; where the former ends, the latter begins. In the close of the 4th chapter, we have this note. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*; not that the name of the Lord had never been called upon before, for Abel, righteously, and Cain hypocritically had both called on his name. But now, as the world began to increase, and prophaneness to abound, is it probable, that this was the time when they that feared God first began to separate themselves from the world, and, according to the light bestowed upon them, to worship God in social communities, bearing an open testimony against the profane: and hence obtained that character, *the Sons of God*. But the beginning of the 6th chapter informs us how the defection came on, and apostacy took place: Then, from that strict separation, they, or their descendants and proselytes, in process of time began to decline, and came into a more sociable and fashionable intimacy with their neighbours; entertaining more favourable opinions of their prophaneness; nor looking upon the love, fear, and worship of God, as matters of such consequence as to be a wall of partition; and so laid aside their former austerity and reservedness (with which, no doubt, their
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neighbours had often upbraided them) until the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman no longer appeared to subsist. This modish charity (always the bane of true godliness) thus prevailing, and the friendship of the world being more in esteem than the glory of God, by the intermarriages which ensued, they came all to one level, and the fear of God vanished out of the earth.

BUT some persons conjecture, that there must be something else in the case, because it is said, *there were giants in the earth in those days*; but whether they were gigantic in stature, or in power and oppression, I leave to nicer critics; allow them to be giants in bulk, it is not certain, whether that proceeded from any thing unnatural in the generation, or was sent as a judgment from God. Neither is it expressly said, that these were the productions of those mixtures; but it is said, *when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown*. And this is very easy to account for; for these children, having imbibed the wicked principles of their mothers, would naturally accommodate themselves to the prophane, and gain their respect, for the world will love his own. And, on the other hand, it is too common with religious people to value persons very much, merely because they had devout fathers. Now these having seen the devotion of their fathers, might easily learn to mimic, and put on a form of godliness, so to gain reputation among the worshippers of God. Thus it was easy for them to grow great by uniting families and interests,

terests, which has often been the case, and frequently is to this day, where religion is made a cloak to put on, or put off, as the time serves.— And thus the degenerate offspring of devout persons are commonly the authors of the greatest mischief.—Abimelech had the respect of the people, because he was the son of Gideon; but he was the son of an harlot, of an idolatrous city, whose wicked ways he learned, and so he usurped the kingdom in a manner most treacherous and bloody. Absalom was the son of David, but his mother was a heathen princess, and he had learned the ways of the Court of Geshur, yet he had the address to insinuate himself into the affections of the people of Israel, of which he so far availed himself as to draw the whole kingdom into rebellion against his father.— Hence I see nothing in the history of these antediluvians but effects arising from natural causes, of which the first given is mixed marriages.

AFTER Israel entered the Promised Land, the first thing mentioned as the occasion of their idolatry, and which laid the foundation of their ruin, was their intermarriages with the idolatrous inhabitants. The second chapter of the book of Judges give a general account of their revolting from the Lord, and of his dealing with them in consequence of their sin; but while the particulars of their apostacy come to be related, this is the very first instance, chap. iii. 6, *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.*

IF they married their persons, serving their gods was certain to be the consequence.—This the
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Lord foretold them; and for this very reason gave such strict prohibitions in his law. *Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16.* *Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land—and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Deut. vii. 3, 4.* Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods. *Joshua xxiii. 12, 13.* If ye do in any wise make marriages with them, and go in unto them and they to you, know for a certainty that they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, &c. And that this was the inevitable consequence when they violated these sacred precepts, is evident in many instances. *1 Kings xi. 2, 3.* Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love—and his wives turned away his heart. It is said of Ahab, *1 Kings xvi. 31.* He took to wife Jezabel the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. *Chap. xxi. 25.* There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezabel his wife stirred up. Yet Jehoshaphat, forgetting the law of his God, took a daughter of Ahab for a wife to his son Jehoram, who proving a very wicked prince, this is given as a reason of it. *2 Kings viii. 18.* For the daughter of Ahab was his wife. And likewise his son Ahazia, walking in the

the same wicked course, the reason given is this, 2 Chron. xxii. 3. *For his mother was his Counsellor to do wickedly.* And the wickedness of the people, Priests, and Levites, is ascribed to the same cause. Ezra ix. 2. *For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their son.* And see with what contrition this iniquity was confessed by those that trembled at God's commandment, Ezra ix. 10, 15. and with what zeal they opposed this flagrant violation of God's holy law, Neh. xiii. 23, 28.

BUT some will say the partition wall is now broken down, and no nation is to be called common, therefore, the prohibition is not so binding to Christians as it was to Israel. I confess, in the sight of God, there is no difference of nations, countries, or families, whether Greek, Jew, Briton, or Hottentot, but the irreconcilable separation between them that are after the flesh, and them that are after the spirit, (of which the separation between Jews and Gentiles was but a shadow) is eternally radicated in the two seeds. Therefore, by so much as Christians now are blessed with superior light, the obligation to avoid every thing that may tend to corrupt the mind, from the simplicity that is in Christ, is more strictly binding. But under the gospel the prohibition is not national but personal, 2 Cor. vi. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:* According to the Apostle's direction, those that are already married to unbelievers, are, in conscience, bound to fulfil their marriage covenant: But in his counsel to those that are unmarried, he lays down this salutary precept, 2 Cor. vii. 29. *Only in the Lord,*
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AND now, my friend, if thou hast an humble regard to the word of the living God, I am certain I need say no more ; and if thou hast not, all my attempts would be fruitless. I do not expect this counsel will be effectual to many persons, notwithstanding the great demand there has been both for the genuine and spurious editions of this enigmatical essay : On the other hand, it gives me some suspicion lest there be something in it that favours more of flesh than spirit, which has induced some persons to read it as an amusement, or a novel, rather than as a branch of the counsel of God. I freely declare it does not give me any pleasure to think that ever I published any thing so agreeable to the taste of people of that stamp to be a temptation to them to pirate it. I have published some tracts upon subjects far more interesting and momentous, for which I have not found equal demand ; nor have I learned that any persons of the same character ever thought them worth their notice ; and I had rather choose never to publish any more, than to be the author of any thing which should not contain more of the truth, power, and spirit of the gospel of Christ, than to be the subject of their approbation — But, my dear friend, if these few hints which I have laid before thee may be blessed as a seasonable monition to excite thee to set the Lord before thy face, so as to choose an help-meet for thee, my end is answered ; and may the blessing of thy God attend thee. *Farewell.*

M^c GOWING.



